

based on U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime annual assessments, approximately 140 tons of Afghan heroin enter Iran each year from Afghanistan—105 tons—and from Pakistan—35 tons; the estimated heroin user population in Iran is around 400,000 individuals, consuming, at a rate of about 35 grams per year, almost 14 tons of heroin annually; drug trafficking is considered such a major security threat that the government has spent over US\$600 million to dig ditches, build barriers and install barbed wire to stop well-armed drug convoys from entering the country; and more than 3,500 Iranian border guards have been killed in the past three decades by drug traffickers.

Given that the Iranian drug use epidemic is providing funding for the insurgency in Afghanistan, it seems logical to begin a cooperative dialogue with Iran on this area of mutual concern to build trust between both sides and promote progress on other matters, particularly Iran's nuclear program.

I am hopeful that the passage of this legislation will not cease efforts on a diplomatic solution, but open the door to finding new ways to build trust and understanding between Iran and the international community.

There is no guarantee that we will be successful in convincing Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment program but we have to explore every possible avenue.

I firmly believe that we can still find a solution and work out our differences.

I am hopeful that this legislation will bring us closer to that goal.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of this conference report for robust sanctions against Iran. I was proud to serve with, among others of my colleagues, Senator DODD, on the conference committee. I want to recognize the hard work he has done to create a strong sanctions bill.

These sanctions, I believe, will deter the threat Iran poses to U.S. national security because of its suspected nuclear weapons program. A country that has huge oil reserves clearly does not need nuclear power for nuclear energy. Therefore, the difference between its stated goals and its actions creates, I believe, a threat to the national security of the United States.

I have been eager for today's vote. During the process of the conference committee, I have advocated for the strongest sanctions possible.

I believe deeply that we must apply maximum pressure to the Iranian regime, that it is a growing threat to the region, the world, and a threat to its own people. In my view, tightening the screws on the Iranian regime genuinely advances the cause of stability and peace in the Middle East as well as our own national security. These sanctions are an essential means to that end.

I have seen what the United Nations has done, and I am glad we got some multilateral response. But, in my view, they are not strong enough. That is why I think it is essential that we continue to lead many of our allies, who will be more robust in their actions if we pass this legislation today.

In my view, it is essential that we freeze the assets of Iranian officials who have supported terrorism—with this legislation we will do that—that we impose sanctions against companies that engage in oil-related business with the Iranian regime—and with this legislation we will do that—that we monitor Iran's usage of energy-related resources other than refined petroleum, especially ethanol, to ensure Iran is not allowed to replace its current petroleum needs with ethanol which would, in essence, severely undercut the intent behind these sanctions. So I am glad we have pushed for language that will follow that.

We need the ban on trade with Iran to be strong, to be significant, and to be airtight. We need to press the Iranian Government to respect its citizens' human rights and freedoms, to identify Iranian officials responsible for violating those rights and impose financial penalties and travel restrictions on these human rights abusers.

We need to prohibit the U.S. Government from contracting with those companies that export communication-jamming or monitoring technology to Iran. We simply cannot allow the regime to restrict communications between Iranians and between Iran and the outside world as happened during the postelection protests.

We clearly see there is a desire among the average Iranians to be able to change the nature of their lives. We saw those willing to risk their freedom, willing to risk their lives. We cannot have the U.S. Government contracting with those companies that export communication-jamming or monitoring technology to Iran that in essence allows the regime to do exactly that.

We need to ban trade with Iran with exceptions for the export of food, medicines, humanitarian aid, and the exchange of informational materials.

There is something I included in the Senate bill before it went to conference, and I am glad to see it is largely still in the legislation we will vote on today. We needed targeted sanctions against the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, its supporters and affiliates, and any foreign governments that provide the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps with support.

I am pleased to see this report will ban U.S. banks from engaging in financial transactions with foreign banks that do business with the Revolutionary Guard or facilitate Iran's illicit nuclear program. The Revolutionary Guard has now spread like a cancer throughout Iranian society, and it is involved in almost everything in Iran. We need to specifically target the IRGC, the Iranian Revolutionary

Guard Corps, and this legislation does that.

The robust sanctions against the Iranian regime that I will vote for today, and that I helped fashion, are a positive and necessary step to increase pressure on Iran so the regime fully understands the world will not only not tolerate its deceit and deception any longer, but it cannot tolerate its march to nuclear power and ultimately nuclear weapons. I will vote for these sanctions because they are robust, because they are in our national security interests and in the interests of the region and the world.

I hope my colleagues, on a strong bipartisan basis, will join in casting similar votes because when we do, we send a message, No. 1, to the administration that there is, I hope, near unanimous support for the type of sanctions we are advocating that strengthens the hand of the President as he deals with other countries in the world, as he deals in the international forum, and it sends a clear message to Ahmadinejad that the United States is serious about stopping its march to nuclear weaponry.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to share my concerns as well about Iran and to express my support for tough sanctions against Iran. Iran poses a threat to the United States as well as to the international community. It continues to support terrorist organizations around the world, including Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran has also called for the destruction of the democratic State of Israel. These actions illustrate Iran's destructive intentions.

Iran continues to pursue nuclear capabilities. While Iran claims its nuclear programs are intended for civilian use only, this is very difficult to believe. In fact, reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency of February of 2008 and May of 2010 question Iran's claim of pursuing nuclear capabilities for purely peaceful purposes. Nuclear capabilities and proper management of these capabilities is a serious responsibility. Iran has neither earned the right nor the trust for this nuclear responsibility.

Iran continues to develop its nuclear programs without giving the International Atomic Energy Agency sufficient access, access to and information regarding its nuclear program. I understand the need for energy and the complexities surrounding the dual use nature of nuclear technology. However, Iran placed itself under obligations to the international community and agreed to comply with international safeguards and inspections.

Iran has not fulfilled its commitments. It has not fulfilled its commitment to be transparent with the International Atomic Energy Agency or to maintain obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Iran does not want to join the international community efforts on curbing